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§ 2011. Congressional declaration of policy

It is declared to be the policy of Congress, in order to promote the general welfare, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's population by raising levels of nutrition among low-income households. Congress finds that the limited food purchasing power of low-income households contributes to hunger and malnutrition among members of such households. Congress further finds that increased utilization of food in establishing and maintaining adequate national levels of nutrition will promote the distribution in a beneficial manner of the Nation's agricultural abundance and will strengthen the Nation's agricultural economy, as well as result in more orderly marketing and distribution of foods. To alleviate such hunger and malnutrition, a food stamp program is herein authorized which will permit low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet through normal channels of trade by increasing food purchasing power for all eligible households who apply for participation.

(Pub. L. 88-525, § 2, Aug. 31, 1964, 78 Stat. 703; Pub. L. 91-671, § 1, Jan. 11, 1971, 84 Stat. 2048; Pub. L. 95-113, title XIII, § 1301, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 958.)

AMENDMENTS

1977—Pub. L. 95-113 substituted “a more nutritious diet” for “a nutritionally adequate diet” as the object of the program.

1971—Pub. L. 91-671 provided for cooperation in utilization of Nation's abundance of food by other agencies, struck out “to the maximum extent practicable” before “to safeguard the health”, enunciated finding that limited food purchasing power of low-income households contributes to hunger and malnutrition, and substituted “promote the distribution” for “will tend to cause the distribution” and authorization of a program (to alleviate hunger and malnutrition) which will permit low-income households to purchase a nutritionally adequate diet through normal channels of trade for prior authorization of a program (to effectuate policy of Congress and purposes of this chapter) which will permit such households to receive a greater share of Nation's abundance of food.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1977 AMENDMENT

Section 1301 of Pub. L. 95-113 provided that the amendment made by that section is effective Oct. 1, 1977.

SHORT TITLE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 107-171, title IV, § 4001, May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 305, provided that: “This title [enacting section 3007 of this title and section 1161 of Title 2, The Congress, amending sections 1431e, 2012, 2014 to 2017, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2025 to 2028, 2031, 2034, 2036, and 7508 of this title, sections 1612, 1613, and 1631 of Title 8, Aliens and Nationality, and sections 1755, 1758, 1760, 1769, and 1786 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, repealing section 2033 of this title, enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 612c, 2014 to 2016, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2025, 2026, 2028, 2034, 2036, and 3171 of this title, section 1161 of Title 2, section 1612 of Title 8, and sections 1755, 1758, 1769, and 1786 of Title 42, and amending provisions set out as a note under section 612c of this title] may be cited as the ‘Food Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2002’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 2000 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 106-171, § 1, Feb. 11, 2000, 114 Stat. 3, provided that: “This Act [amending section 2016 of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 2016 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Electronic Benefit Transfer Interoperability and Portability Act of 2000’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 103-225, § 1, Mar. 25, 1994, 108 Stat. 106, provided that: “This Act [amending sections 2012, 2014 to 2016, 2018, and 2026 of this title, enacting provisions set out as notes under section 2012 of this title, and repealing provisions set out as notes under sections 2015 and 2016 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Food Stamp Program Improvements Act of 1994’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1993 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 103-66, title XIII, § 13901(a), Aug. 10, 1993, 107 Stat. 672, provided that: “This chapter [chapter 3 (§§ 13901-13971) of title XIII of Pub. L. 103-66, amending sections 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2020 to 2023, 2025, 2026, and 2028 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 2025 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Mickey Leland Childhood Hunger Relief Act’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 101-624, title XVII, § 1701, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3783, provided that: “This title [enacting section 2032 of this title, amending sections 1431, 1431e, 2012, 2014 to 2018, 2020 to 2022, 2024 to 2028, 3175, and 3175e of this title, section 6109 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code, and sections 405 and 9904 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, enacting provisions set out as notes under this section and sections 612c, 2012, 2014, 2020, 2025, and 2028 of this title and section 1751 of Title 42, and amending provisions set out as notes under sections 612c and 2012 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1988 AMENDMENTS

Pub. L. 100-435, § 1(a), Sept. 19, 1988, 102 Stat. 1645, provided that: “This Act [amending sections 2012, 2014 to 2017, 2020 to 2023, 2025, and 2026 of this title, section 713a-14 of Title 15, Commerce and Trade, and sections 1761, 1766, 1773, and 1786 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 612c and 2012 of this title and sections 1766 and 1786 of Title 42, and amending provisions set out as notes under sections 612c, 1731, and 2012 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Hunger Prevention Act of 1988’.”

Pub. L. 100-232, § 1, Jan. 5, 1988, 101 Stat. 1566, provided that: “This Act [amending section 2014 of this title and enacting provisions set out as a note under section 612c of this title] may be cited as the ‘Charitable Assistance and Food Bank Act of 1987’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1986 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 99-570, title XI, §11001, Oct. 27, 1986, 100 Stat. 3207-167, provided that: “This title [amending sections 2012, 2018 and 2019 of this title, sections 1531 and 1603 of Title 29, Labor, sections 3003 and 3020 [now 5103 and 5120] of Title 38, Veterans’ Benefits, and sections 1383 and 1396a of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, and enacting provisions set out as notes under section 2012 of this title, sections 5103 and 5120 of Title 38, and sections 602, 1383 and 1396a of Title 42] may be cited as the ‘Homeless Eligibility Clarification Act’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1982 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 97-253, title I, §140, Sept. 8, 1982, 96 Stat. 772, provided that: “This subtitle [subtitle E (§§140-193) of title I of Pub. L. 97-253, amending sections 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029 of this title and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 1624, 2012, and 2028 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1982’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1981 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 97-98, title XIII, §1301, Dec. 22, 1981, 95 Stat. 1282, provided that: “This title [enacting sections 2029 and 2270 of this title, amending sections 2012, 2014 to 2016, 2018 to 2020, and 2023 to 2027 of this title, enacting a provision set out as a note under section 2012 of this title, and amending provisions set out as notes under section 612c of this title] may be cited as the ‘Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Amendments of 1981’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1980 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 96-249, §1, May 26, 1980, 94 Stat. 357, provided: “That this Act [amending sections 2012, 2014, 2015, 2019, 2020, and 2024 to 2027 of this title, sections 6103 and 7213 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code, and sections 503 and 504 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 2014 and 2026 of this title, section 6103 of Title 26, and section 503 of Title 42] may be cited as the ‘Food Stamp Act Amendments of 1980’.”

SHORT TITLE OF 1976 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 94-339, §1, July 5, 1976, 90 Stat. 799, provided: “That this Act [amending sections 2012, 2015, and 2016 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Emergency Food Stamp Vendor Accountability Act of 1976’.”

SHORT TITLE

Section 1 of Pub. L. 88-525, as amended by Pub. L. 95-113, title XIII, §1301, Sept. 29, 1977, 91 Stat. 958, provided that: “This Act [this chapter] may be cited as the ‘Food Stamp Act of 1977’.”

STUDY OF NATIONAL DATABASE FOR FEDERAL MEANS-TESTED PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Pub. L. 105-379, §2, Nov. 12, 1998, 112 Stat. 3399, provided that:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a study of options for the design, development, implementation, and operation of a national database to track participation in Federal means-tested public assistance programs.

“(b) ADMINISTRATION.—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall—

“(1) analyze available data to determine—

“(A) whether the data have addressed the needs of the food stamp program established under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

“(B) whether additional or unique data need to be developed to address the needs of the food stamp program; and

“(C) the feasibility and cost-benefit ratio of each available option for a national database;

“(2) survey the States to determine how the States are enforcing the prohibition on recipients receiving

assistance in more than one State under Federal means-tested public assistance programs;

“(3) determine the functional requirements of each available option for a national database; and

“(4) ensure that all options provide safeguards to protect against the unauthorized use or disclosure of information in the national database.

“(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act [Nov. 12, 1998], the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the study conducted under this section.

“(d) FUNDING.—Out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the Secretary of the Treasury shall provide to the Secretary of Agriculture \$500,000 to carry out this section. The Secretary shall be entitled to receive the funds and shall accept the funds, without further appropriation.”

WELFARE SIMPLIFICATION AND COORDINATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Pub. L. 101-624, title XVII, §1778, Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3814, provided that:

“(a) APPOINTMENT AND MEMBERSHIP.—

“(1) ESTABLISHMENT [sic].—There is established an Advisory Committee on Welfare Simplification and Coordination (hereafter in this section referred to as the ‘Committee’) consisting of not fewer than 7, nor more than 11, members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture (hereafter in this section referred to as the ‘Secretary’), after consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and with the advice of State and local officials responsible for administering the food stamp program, cash and medical assistance programs for low-income families and individuals under the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.], and programs providing housing assistance to needy families and individuals, and representatives of recipients and recipient advocacy organizations associated with such programs.

“(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—The members of the Committee shall be individuals who are familiar with the rules, goals, and limitations of Federal food stamp, cash, medical, and housing assistance programs for low-income families and individuals, and may include individuals who have demonstrated expertise in evaluating the operations of and interaction among such programs as they affect administrators and recipients, persons who have experience in administering such programs at the Federal, State, or local level, and representatives of administrators and recipients affected by such programs.

“(b) PURPOSE.—It shall be the purpose of the Committee, in consultation, where appropriate, with program administrators and representatives of recipients—

“(1) to identify the significant policies implemented in the food stamp program, cash and medical assistance programs under the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.], and housing assistance programs (whether resulting from law, regulations, or administrative practice) that, because they differ substantially, make it difficult for those eligible to apply for and obtain benefits from more than one program and restrict the ability of administrators of such programs to provide efficient, timely, and appropriate benefits to those eligible for more than one type of assistance, drawing, where appropriate, on previous efforts to coordinate and simplify such programs and policies;

“(2) to examine the major reasons for such different programs and policies;

“(3) to evaluate how and the extent to which such different programs and policies hinder, to a significant degree, the receipt of benefits from more than one program and substantially restrict administrators’ ability to provide efficient, timely, and appropriate benefits;

“(4) to recommend common or simplified programs and policies (including recommendations for changes

in law, regulations, and administrative practice and for policies that do not currently exist in such programs) that would substantially reduce difficulties in applying for and obtaining benefits from more than one program and significantly increase the ability of administrators of such programs to efficiently provide timely and appropriate assistance to those eligible for more than one type of assistance; and

“(5) to describe the major effects of such common or simplified programs and policies (including how such common or simplified programs and policies would enhance or conflict with the purposes of such programs, how they would ease burdens on administrators and recipients, how they would affect program costs and participation, and the degree to which they would change the relationships between the Federal Government and the States in such programs) and the reasons for recommending such programs and policies (including reasons, if any, that might be sufficient to override special rules derived from the purposes of individual programs).

“(c) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Secretary shall provide the Committee with such technical and other assistance, including secretarial and clerical assistance, as may be required to carry out its functions.

“(d) REIMBURSEMENT.—Members of the Committee shall serve without compensation but shall receive reimbursement for necessary travel and subsistence expenses incurred by such members in the performance of the duties of the Committee.

“(e) REPORTS.—Not later than July 1, 1993, the Committee shall prepare and submit, to the appropriate committees of Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development a final report, including recommendations for common or simplified programs and policies and the effects of and reasons for such programs and policies and may submit interim reports, including reports on common or simplified programs and policies covering less than the complete range of programs and policies under review, to the committees and such Secretaries as deemed appropriate by the Committee.”

RULES

Pub. L. 99-198, title XV, §1583, Dec. 23, 1985, 99 Stat. 1595, provided that: “Not later than April 1, 1987, the Secretary shall issue rules to carry out the amendments made by this title [amending sections 612c, 1431e, 2012 to 2023, and 2025 to 2029 of this title, section 49b of Title 29, Labor, and section 503 of Title 42, The Public Health and Welfare, and amending provisions set out as notes under section 612c of this title].”

IMPLEMENTATION OF 1977 AMENDMENT; SAVINGS PROVISION; AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS; REPORT

Section 1303 of Pub. L. 95-113, as amended by Pub. L. 97-375, title I, §103(a), Dec. 21, 1982, 96 Stat. 1819, provided that:

“(a) The Secretary of Agriculture shall implement the Food Stamp Act of 1977 [this chapter as amended by Pub. L. 95-113] as expeditiously as possible consistent with the efficient and effective administration of the food stamp program. The provisions of the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended [this chapter prior to amendment by Pub. L. 95-113], which are relevant to current regulations of the Secretary governing the food stamp program, shall remain in effect until such regulations are revoked, superseded, amended, or modified by regulations issued pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1977. Coupons issued pursuant to the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended, and in general use as of the effective date of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 [Oct. 1, 1977], shall continue to be usable to purchase food, and all other liabilities of the Secretary, States, and applicant or participating households, under the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended, shall continue in force until finally resolved or terminated by administrative or judicial action, or otherwise.

“(b) Pending proceedings under the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended, shall not be abated by reason of any provision of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, but shall be disposed of pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended, in effect prior to the effective date of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 [Oct. 1, 1977].

“(c) Appropriations made available to carry out the Food Stamp Act of 1964, as amended, shall be available to carry out the provisions of the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

“(d) [Repealed. Pub. L. 97-375, title I, §103(a), Dec. 1, 1982, 96 Stat. 1819.]”

§ 2012. Definitions

As used in this chapter, the term:

(a) “Allotment” means the total value of coupons a household is authorized to receive during each month.

(b) “Authorization card” means the document issued by the State agency to an eligible household which shows the allotment the household is entitled to be issued.

(c) “Certification period” means the period for which households shall be eligible to receive authorization cards. The certification period shall not exceed 12 months, except that the certification period may be up to 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled. A State agency shall have at least 1 contact with each certified household every 12 months. The limits specified in this subsection may be extended until the end of any transitional benefit period established under section 2020(s) of this title.

(d) “Coupon” means any coupon, stamp, type of certificate, authorization card, cash or check issued in lieu of a coupon, or access device, including an electronic benefit transfer card or personal identification number, issued pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

(e) “Coupon issuer” means any office of the State agency or any person, partnership, corporation, organization, political subdivision, or other entity with which a State agency has contracted for, or to which it has delegated functional responsibility in connection with, the issuance of coupons to households.

(f) “Drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehabilitation program” means any such program conducted by a private nonprofit organization or institution, or a publicly operated community mental health center, under part B of title XIX of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300x et seq.) to provide treatment that can lead to the rehabilitation of drug addicts or alcoholics.

(g) “Food” means (1) any food or food product for home consumption except alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and hot foods or hot food products ready for immediate consumption other than those authorized pursuant to clauses (3), (4), (5), (7), (8), and (9) of this subsection, (2) seeds and plants for use in gardens to produce food for the personal consumption of the eligible household, (3) in the case of those persons who are sixty years of age or over or who receive supplemental security income benefits or disability or blindness payments under title I, II, X, XIV, or XVI of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 301 et seq., 401 et seq., 1201 et seq., 1351 et seq., 1381 et seq.], and their spouses, meals pre-